



HOME DELIVERY SYSTEM- AS FRIENDLY AS IT GETS. A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO HOME DELIVERY OF FAST FOOD IN ALAPPUZHA DISTRICT OF KERALA STATE

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Introduction

Marketing is not merely an economic activity. Marketing is undergoing dramatic and exciting changes, and the field promises to be just as dynamic in the years ahead. The smallest firms are now using innovative marketing techniques to compete globally and thus, marketing has emerged as the most critical functions in the present day's business environment. Marketing strategies for achieving their respective goals are modified and rightly made effective by the sectors like Tourism, Hospitals, Educational Institutions, Transport Business, Hospitality and even places of worships and Religious Institutions. The basic concepts and practices of modern marketing are used in a wide variety of settings; product and service firms, consumer and business markets, domestic and global companies and small and large business. Creating customer value and satisfaction are the heart of modern marketing thinking and practice. Marketing is the delivery of customer satisfaction at a profit. The two fold goal of marketing is to attract new customers by promising superior value and to keep current customers by delivering satisfaction. It implies that the customer satisfaction still remain as an integral part of modern marketing. However, the relationship marketing is now being elevated to a higher plane of social marketing.

An important diversification in the field of retailing is the emergence of non store retailing. A growing amount of selling to individual customer is now taking place outside the traditional retailing structures. This innovation has culminated in direct marketing. Direct marketing is the marketing of products to ultimate customers through face-to-face sales presentations at home or in the work place. The customer relationship aspect of direct marketing is achieved through home delivery system. Delivery is the process of transporting goods from a source location to a predefined destination. It is also known as "in home selling", "house to house selling" or "door to door sales". Retailing is a highly competitive field of business because of free entry and in order to survive and to win an edge over the competitors, innovative customer relationship building techniques were required. Some of the enterprising entrepreneurs have found an answer in home delivery. Home delivery is the bringing of items to the customer's home rather than the customer taking or collecting them from the store. Even though home delivery system has lot of variations the term home delivery is used in this study is to denote a mode of retailing performed by restaurants and small food manufacturing/ producing units processing a high turnover. Home delivery system is an important mode of retailing which has gained momentum. This is adopted by retailers to enhance customer relationship and customers have welcomed it due to its economics. The popularity of home delivery system can be ascribed to the incremental customer satisfaction that it has succeeded to generate.

Need and Significance of the Study

An innovative mode of retailing which has gained momentum seems to be home delivery system. In the present environment and social scenario the home delivery system has assumed an important role. The awareness and frequency of usage of home delivery system in public and private sector has increased manifold. The home delivery system inherently possesses the quality of service orientation so that the marketing of a commodity is intrinsically accompanied by service. Home delivery is often available for fast food and other convenience products. Sometime home delivery of supermarket of goods is also possible. The concept of home delivery is getting more organized and well accepted by our society. The growing trend has got further stimulation owing to changing life styles of the people. Year after years the concept has grown in leaps and bounds, may be people have gone crazy or the concept of home food delivery is actually a show stealer. Yes, eating out at restaurant has its glitter, but home food delivery has its own shine and is definitely one of the best options for filling up the bellies. The customer satisfaction is thus attained by adopting this type of marketing and the volume of transactions will increase beyond the traditional way of marketing. Thus, the system bears the birthmarks of service marketing. It is a way of extending assistance to the customer with in a limited time and also saves valuable time and economy. If, skillful time management and reasonable timesaving without yielding quality is possible, undoubtedly people will not hesitate to embrace the system of home delivery. It is being enforced by Asian, USA, and other countries. The multinational giants like Amazon, Flip cart and others are exploiting the techniques of home delivery system to a large extent. It helps customers to be free from wandering door-to-door shopping and thereby saving time and money. Thus, with the support of the remarkable innovative mode of home delivery system transformed radically the domain of retailing. The home delivery system of marketing is genuinely adopted by the retailers with a view to boost and enriches the customer relationship and well received by customers owing its multitude of economics. Home delivery system is adopted by retailers to enhance customer relationship and customers have welcomed it due to its effectiveness and obvious economics. This study has thus, having economic and social relevance. The prospects and problems of home delivery system from the point of view of customers and retailers is

worthy of an in depth analysis and interpretation. Thus, the relevance and importance of the study of home delivery system is obviously turns to be important and should focus on the following:

- To study about the potentialities and effectiveness of home delivery system particularly in Alappuzha district of Kerala state.
- To analyse the extent in attaining customer satisfaction with the introduction of home delivery system. Is this system aims to satisfy customer needs in the best possible manner?
- To study about the operation of home delivery system with the help of fast growing transport and communication systems.
- Weather the home delivery system recognizes the fact that time is a very precious commodity in the present environment and a valuable resource.
- The mechanisms adopted in the home delivery system to achieve the time aspect.

Review of Literature

An attempt is made to review the existing literature on the subject and to explain the design adopted for this study. Philip Kotler (1999) defines marketing as “A social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others.

Ganesh Chella (2002) stressed on the importance of retailing and expressed the opinion as “Retailing combines many of the features of service businesses such as a courier company, a fast-food restaurant, an FMCG business, a five star hotel and a household. Retail has the back-end logistics complexities of a courier company. It has the speed and standardisation needs of a fast-food restaurant. It has the supply chain, brand management and customer knowledge requirements of an FMCG business. It calls for the present contact, attention and ambience of a five star hotel. Finally, a retailer’s task is quite similar to a lady wife’s. Whatever she does in the beginning of the day get undone by night and needs to be redone from scratch and has to be perfect each time. It is noticeable when it is not done, but acknowledged when it is.”

James Cullition (1997) poetically presents, “The marketing man is a decider and an artist- a mixer of ingredients, who sometimes follows a recipe prepared by others; sometimes adopts a recipe to the ingredients immediately available; sometimes invents some new ingredients; and sometimes experiments with ingredients as no one else has tried before.

Michael R. Solomon (1997) suggested the different stages in the evolution of marketing and is as follows. “The production orientation is that emphasizes the most efficient ways to produce and distribute product. The sales orientation emphasis aggressive sales practices and sees marketing strictly as a sales function. Customer orientation focuses on ways to satisfy customer needs and wants. The new era orientation means a devotion to excellence in designing and producing products and creating products that benefit the customer plus the firm’s employees, shareholders and fellow citizens”

According to the traditional view of Adam Smith (1975) “ Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production and the interests of the producer ought to be attended to, only so far as it may be necessary for promoting the consumer”

The home delivery system according to William G. Zikmund (1998) is “One customer service offered by retail grocery stores before the widespread growth in supermarkets was home delivery. Large chains did not generally adopt this practice. However, some retailers kept their foot in the door by operating specialized home delivery routes.”

Ramaswamy V S (1997) observes that “Home selling is popular in India and is likely to gain further ground in the years to come.”

Neelamegham S. (1992) describes the importance of direct selling and suggests that “Direct selling is a specific tactic and not a broad spectrum strategy. Entrepreneurs often fail to understand this when launching consumer non durables. Not realizing that advertising is cheaper and more effective in creating a brand image, they resort to direct selling only to be turned away by unbelieving lady wives.

It is revealed that the different aspects of home delivery system have seldom been subjected to scientific enquiry in a substantial manner. Published literature is almost non-existent on home delivery systems except some meager reference in marketing books. It is against this background that the present study is undertaken to evaluate the working of home delivery system in Alappuzha district of Kerala state.

Methodology

Visiting retail outlets where the system of home delivery is practiced effectively and meeting with retail dealers and discussing the various aspects of the system with them, collecting news and views from employees of retail dealers, meeting



customers who are beneficiaries of the system are the methods adopted for collecting data. However, a review of concepts and previous studies are useful to define precisely the concepts used in this study.

Scenario of Retailing

The use of men, money, materials and machinery are rewarded through marketing and thus all the economic activities are based on marketing. The production practices are influenced through marketing activity. Both the producer and customer are correlated through marketing. The place where both of them are used to assemble is known as the market, where physical distribution of goods takes place. It is the market, which determines the customer's needs and desires and educates them with regard to the availability of products and its features, persuade them to buy and finally enhances their gratification. Hence customer satisfaction should be the driving force of marketing activities. According to Philip Kotler (1999), "Marketing operates within a dynamic global environment, requiring marketing managers to think freshly about their marketing objectives and practices. Present companies are wrestling with changing customer values and orientations, a sluggish world economy, the growth of nonprofit marketing; the information technology boom, including increased global competition; a call for greater ethical and social responsibility, and a host of other economic, political and social challenges". The new concept of retail marketing emphasizes extending and depending, the business relationship with their customers. It is retaining profitable customers previously acquired and efforts are made to tie the customers. Home delivery system envisages the concept of relationship marketing and goes beyond to other family relationships.

Retailing at present operates in a very high competitive environment and is trying desperately to avoid debts and bankruptcy. Due to many factors like, spending habit, disparity in income levels, and economic setup all contribute to the sudden downturn in customers demand. The retailers are forced to bear the expensive overheads as before. With the low margins, the survival of retailing especially the large with high overhead costs is definitely difficult. In order to increase and compensate the loss sustainable and survive the adoption of home delivery system seems to be indispensable them to a great extent. Innovation is making changes. For a retailer the innovation for future seems to be direct contact with customers and home delivery system is best available means to achieve that end.

Kerala Model Development in Hospitality

The style of development that has been practiced in the southern Indian State of Kerala is the Kerala model of development. The State has achieved improvements in material conditions of living, reflected in indicators of social development, compatible to those of many developed countries, even though the state's per capita income is low in comparison to them. Achievements such low level infant mortality and population growth, and high level of literacy and life expectancy, along with the factors responsible for such achievements have been considered characteristic results of the Kerala model. Expenditure on all food items have shown a sustainable increase at present in both urban and rural areas and among below poverty level (BPL) and above poverty level (APL) categories. The use credit and debit cards increased in an extensive way. Thus the State of Kerala achieved the position for the availability of best food and very good people. Kerala model of hospitality extended by Alappuzha district is commented by the visiting tourist that, "Our lunch in Kerala with hot dishes was like cherry on the top of cake. In our Kerala journey we have been eating only authentic Kerala food but we have the best meal at this home. We called in little late in the morning but still they accommodate us and feed us hot and fresh meal. Sambhar, fish curry and fried chicken, just too good. Such good hospitality we felt like eating food at our relatives. We will definitely visit again in Alappuzha".

Home Delivery

One of the services provided by the retailers to their customers is the traditionally accepted home delivery system. House to house selling is one of the oldest non-store personal retailing methods, which built around direct contact between the seller and customer at the home of the customers. It is an innovation in the field of chain of distribution. It envisages an arrangement in which the customers are presented with unique opportunity to satisfy their wants at their doorstep. It involves a clear departure from the traditional modus operandi of marketing of customers coming to the goods, to the goods coming to the customers. Direct delivery is being undertaken by specialist companies and extending maximum satisfaction to its customers. Home retailing is followed by organisations in extensive manner. Customer service offered by retail grocery stores before the widespread growth in supermarkets was home delivery. Some retailers kept their food in the door by operating specialized home delivery routes.

Home delivery is not a new concept, it has certainly evolved accursed multiple industries. This has considered with the rise of online shopping, with e-commerce now established as fastest growing retail market. Although many independent take away outlets have always delivered fast food to customers with in local area. The emergence of niche delivery services such as 'Just Eat', 'Hungry House' and 'Deliveroo'. This is creating a more competitive market place, with firms striking to ensure that customer can tailor their experience to suit their specific needs. In the Indian context, home delivery does not appear to



be an isolated or rare phenomenon and the traces of this system are evident in a number of activities. A technician visiting a site, a doctor going to the house of a patient, building materials appearing at door step of the customer, responding to bulk orders as special occasion like marriages etc., entertaining institutional orders of hostels, hospitals, hotels, etc., all are various forms of home delivery system. Home delivery system is more cost effective compared with the store marketing. This economy is passed on to the customer resulting in better relationship and enhances satisfaction to the customers.

On line food ordering is a process of ordering food from a local restaurant or food cooperative through a web page. In usual practice of these retail outlets to record the orders received by them from their customers in an orderly manner. The orders received are then processed and necessary steps taken for its execution without delay. Before the supplies are made, the orders received are scrutinized for the different quality, varieties etc. of items ordered. For these necessary calls are made in order to avoid returns and complaints. The orders received will be processed and thorough planning and organisation is necessary, otherwise the cost of delivery charges will be much higher. By planning the routes and placing the items in the respective vehicles, enable the reduction in the cost of delivery. Sales bills or delivery chalangans are prepared and given to the customer at the time delivery of item demanded by him.

Comforts from Home

One of the advantages of home delivery is that one gets access to kitchen of various restaurants in neighborhood, without scurrying around across city. Don't have to go through the pains of dressing up appropriately for the occasion. Don't have to be on toes and a fixed smile faces and up with sore checks. On the contrary, when ordering home food delivery, one is at home completely relaxed, dressed as lightly as permissible. Home food delivery is a boon especially for the elderly or for a physically disabled people, for they can have a peek at their favorite delicacies without having to stretch their limbs.

Time Saving

If there is anything valuable next to life in our modern world, it is time. And, one can save time from home food delivery, one could be doing some valuable savings. Especially for people who keep running against the clock at break neck speed to accomplish their seemingly 'mission impossible'. The amount of time which is ideally consumed by your culinary endeavors, one can add them to working hours. Trips to restaurants are equally time consuming, especially if one can go about running business from home. And, yes for others who do not exactly fall into the category of work-zombies, at times by the end of the day their bodies may be running on low batteries. For them a trip to their kitchens or restaurants may appear to be distant dream, home food delivery is cut-out-just for them.

Good Food

Another great advantage of home food delivery is that the food quality is not compromised. The home food delivery guys have done their homework well, and sure have business sense. In the industry which is blooming more than ever, to out shine in business the quality of the food can make all the difference between profit and losses. Hence, one can be assured that one will get the quality of food which is served at the restaurants. And since the delivery companies yell about prompt services, the food delivered with special packing remains hot and steamy. Though one cannot stamp out dining in restaurants all together, they have their own attractions, and benefits. Especially when you are on a date you may want to go all out to make dynamic impression, or you may belong to special class, and may choose to impress your better half at your home.

Best Home Delivery Restaurants at Alappuzha

The Alappuzha district, the Viennese of the East is with well knitted restaurants which are encouraging the home delivery of excellent quality food to its customers. The concept of order in or take your favorite food is extended to the customers of Alappuzha district is made effective and popular. The standard set by these hotels are par beyond the satisfactory level desired by its customers. Generally provide non vegetarian foods to the customers. Food order will be accepted in online and also accepting debit/credit cards for payments. The restaurants mentioned below ensure and extend service to its customers. Novelty in food items with extra care taken in the preparation attracts the customers to these restaurants. Pizza Home delivery services, Fast food home delivery, Biryani restaurants home delivery, Pure vegetarian home delivery. Hookah Smoking restaurant, Chinese restaurants home delivery restaurants home delivery, 24 Hours Pizza home delivery services, North Indian Restaurants home delivery, and Multicuisine restaurants home delivery are the niche and novelty establishments promote the home delivery in Alappuzha district. The customers are having trust on the products produced by these restaurants and they are more and more attracted towards it services. The exact location and contact numbers are available in internet and by using other communication means. Thus the potentialities and effectiveness of home delivery system in Alappuzha is proved excellent with wide service and customer care networks. Network of hotels promoting home delivery system of Alappuzha district, which indicates the popularity of home delivery system by the consumers are as follows:

- Halais Restaurant, CCSB Road, Alappuzha.

- Qahwala Ramil Restaurant
- Memories, AC Road, Pulinkunnu, Alappuzha.
- Thaff Restaurant, Palace Road, Alappuzha.
- DAD' Café, CCSB Road, East of South Police Station, Alappuzha.
- Café Catamaran, Near Munnodi Temple, Alappuzha
- Mushroom Restaurant, Near South Police Station, Kodiveedu, Alappuzha.
- Cassia, Kommady, Alappuzha.
- Kream Korner, Mullackal, South of Temple, Alappuzha.
- Makkani Restaurant, Boat Jetty Road, Opposite Finishing Point, Alappuzha.
- Avacado Garden Restaurant, Zachariya Bazar, Alappuzha.
- Himalaya Bake & More, National Highway 47, South of Kripsasanam, Kalavoor, Alappuzha.
- KFC Alleppey/KFC Alappuzha.
- Hotel Yuvaraj, Alappuzha.
- Thaff Deliquacy, YMCA Road, Near YMCA Center, Alappuzha.
- Seashore Homely Food, Cannal Ward, Near Munnadi Temple, Alappuzha.
- Chicken Chicago, Haripad.
- Huts, Cherthala, Alappuzha.
- Murali Hotel, Haripad.
- Beevees Restaurant, Opposite GHS Palace Road, Alappuzha.
- Hassan's Family Restaurant, Beach Road, Alappuzha.

Perspectives and Problems

Home delivery system offers ease and convenience in buying and it attracts more customers. Higher cost of driving, traffic congestion, parking headaches, lack of time, a shortage of sales help, queues at checkout counters, the new habit of customers in Alappuzha-all encourage the system of home delivery. More personalized service is offered by the system. However, the difficulties experienced by the customers of urban, semi urban and rural pertaining to various aspects are to be taken care. The customers are having the opinion that the system is most suitable to urban and semi urban areas.

Table 1: Feedback of Customers

Feedback of Customers	Urban	Semi Urban	Rural
Suitability	74 (63.79%)	26 (22.41%)	16 (13.80%)
Less Scope for Selection	48 (41.37%)	53 (45.70%)	15 (12.93%)
Quality of Food	58 (50%)	48 (41.37%)	10 (8.63%)
Customer satisfaction	60 (51.72%)	42 (36.21%)	14 (12.07%)

Source: Survey Data

The opinion on less scope for selection, quality of food, liability to meet customer satisfaction are ascertained and the summary of the feedback received from 116 customers of Alappuzha district is given in table 1. From the above table it is revealed that the customers of urban and semi urban areas are highly satisfied with the service received by them from the restaurants. Only 14 (12.07%) respondents from rural areas are with low level of customer satisfaction. Respondents of urban and semi urban areas expressed high rate/opinion about the scope and need of home delivery system in Alappuzha district. Respondents from rural areas are not expressed the opinion of a low level, may be because of the lack awareness or due to their likeness on existing system at their place of residence. Respondents belonging to urban and semi urban areas, ie; 98 (84.48%); expressed great satisfaction on the quality of food delivered by the restaurants. Only 10 (8.63%) respondents of rural areas expressed low opinion about the quality of food. This may be due to the food they availed from the local sources. Home delivery is also in large scale in rural areas of Alappuzha.

Alappuzha district is having 963 "Thattukada"- the way side fast food outlets with local food items- greatly contribute to home delivery system and earn high revenue to the tune of crores INR. The fast food industry is based on principles of quality food served fast. So speed of service should never be axed in the streamlining process. In the quick service world, there is a clear expectation for customers who join the drive, thru or in store queue; to get quality fast food. "Speed of service is in direct correlation to the overall retail sales", says John Scardapane, founder and CEO of Philadelphia based salad works. He says cutting down service staff is a traditional method for quick serves looking to streamline business, but it can be the kiss of death for a quick serve because it slows service. One can cut down and streamline the kitchen and hourly staff in the back of the house, but one can never cut down your sales force or the amount of staff to affect the speed of service. One customer that's unhappy and doesn't come back costs a lot more than the hourly rate one is trying to save by cutting back one

employee. One strategy for increasing speed of service is to evaluate the delay operational procedures and to measure the number of steps it takes to deliver food to the customers. The quality of food may at times deteriorate from the expected standards. However, adequate checks and measures are organized and taken by the food department of Kerala state. The respondents from urban and semi urban are highly satisfied with the selection food. They are having the opinion about the availability food in the restaurants are according to their choices. Respondents from rural areas are slightly unhappy with the selection of food stuff available at their places. This may be due to reduced level of preparation and the variety adopted in the preparation. However, the home delivery system is generally liked by the customers of Alappuzha.

Suggestions

- Home delivery system can be made economical and it can attract more customers by providing good quality and standard foods according to the taste and need of customers.
- There should be minimum time lag for the supply of food on receiving an order.
- All possibilities are to be explored to attract the customers and this system should be made more popular to the entire population.
- Experienced and trained sales personnel are to be employed for dealing with the customers.
- Adequate awareness to be created about the availability of various services and about the quality of food to the customers, essentially. Various advertisement techniques are to be resorted for creating awareness to the customers. Timely updating about the latest changes of food available with each restaurants are to be ensured with fastest means of communication.
- Ensure to keep the hygiene and sanitation part pertaining to the kitchen complex and the restaurant area in particular. Adequate checks and measures are to be made for ensuring a high standard of hygiene and sanitation.
- The periodic medical inspection of the chefs and their assistants is required to be ensured and a proper record to this effect is to be maintained in each restaurants.
- Periodic review of the activities is to be carried out and measures are to be taken for improvements.
- Ensure to ascertain the stock of the situation by checking the accounts, stock and also by curtailing unwanted expenditure.
- Performance based incentive to be given to the sales personnel, chefs and to their assistants. This should be an additional incentive for all for generating additional responsibility and performance.

Conclusions

Home delivery system is a method serving the customer by perpetuating economies of time, cost and effort. This system upholds the saying that “customer is the king”. Hence there is ample evidence to support the claim that home delivery system is likely to emerge as a new and innovative channel of distribution. The mother of this new baby is the changes on the horizons of the retail marketing. The present day customers are more enlightened than their predecessors. “Customers can do no wrong” is amply illustrated by self-service option offered to the customers. The pleasure of selection by personal choice is experienced by the customers and this requirement is to be materialized by the retailer. Thus, home delivery system is to be extended to the customers by recognising, accepting and endorsing the sovereignty, independence and intellectual capacity of modern customers. Restaurants of Alappuzha are equipped with all modern technology for rendering high quality service to its valued and most prestigious customers.

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